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VIEWS
OF
ANCIENT MONUMENTS
IN
CENTRAL AMERICA
CHIAPAS
AND
YVCATAN
BY
F. CATHERWOOD, ARCHT.

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THESE VIEWS

OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA,

CHIAPAS, AND YUCATAN,

ARE INSCRIBED BY

HIS VERY SINCERE FRIEND,

FREDERICK CATHERWOOD.

INTRODUCTION.

THE MONUMENTS represented in this Volume seem, from their novelty and peculiar character, to demand some preliminary explanations of the circumstances under which they are found to exist, and the historic interest that attaches to them, as the most important aids we possess, for the investigation of that great unsettled problem—the origin of the inhabitants of the American continent, and the sources from whence their early civilisation was derived. No questions, merely antiquarian, have given rise to more earnest discussions than those involved in this subject; and, until of late years, the hardihood of the disputants has been in proportion to the scantiness of the evidence that had survived the ravages of conquest, and the iconoclastic bigotry of the earlier Christian missionaries. It is only within the present century that the attention of European scholars has been drawn to the fact, that a new and unexceptionable class of testimony, bearing directly on the Anti-Columbian History of the American continent, was within their reach; that there yet mouldered within the Forests of Yucatan and Guatemala, architectural and sculptural remains of vast size and mysterious purpose, still displaying (though yielding to a daily process of disintegration and decay) a high degree of constructive skill, and attesting, in their ornaments and proportions, to the prevalence of an indigenous and well established system of design, varying from any known models in the old world. The truth of this statement, though at first received with incredulity, has been satisfactorily established by later researches; and I may appeal to the following Drawings for its confirmation. They illustrate some of the more striking objects which engaged my notice as an Artist, during two expeditions, undertaken expressly with a view of exploring the ruined sites of Central America, and preserving some memorials of their present state. The first of these was devoted chiefly to the countries known under the above general title, including the States of Honduras, Guatemala, Chiapas, &c. The ruins at Copan and Palenque were visited during this journey, which occupied part of the years 1839 and 1840. A brief sojourn in Yucatan having shown the richness of the antiquarian harvest that there awaits the gleaner, a second journey, for its more thorough examination, was determined on, in the year 1841: in its progress most of the Drawings in the present Volume were made. The narrative of these expeditions will be found in the well-known works of Mr. J. L. Stephens, “Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan,” 4 vols. 8vo., New York and London; to them, and to the lately published “History of the Conquest of Mexico,” by Mr. Prescott, I must refer the reader desirous of further knowledge. In the one, he will meet with all the information that personal observation, directed by enterprise and enthusiasm, can supply; and in the other, all the light that a most extended range of research through the whole body of existing documentary evidence, can throw on the obscurity that shrouds the history of the unrecorded races—beyond the page of written annals—whose very existence we should be ignorant of, but for the contemplation of their colossal works, still before our eyes.

The term Central America is usually applied to the countries extending from the Republic of New Granada, on the south-west, to the boundaries of the great Mexican Confederation, on the north-east, from 8° to 18° of north latitude. They form the central portion of the long isthmus which unites North and South America, and divides the Atlantic Ocean from the Pacific, and are known as the States of Guatemala, St. Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. The peninsula of Yucatan, though politically distinct, is geographically connected with this region, and projects from its northern extremity into the Gulf of Mexico.

The natural characteristics of this district are as varied as its civil divisions. It may, however, be briefly described as an elevated table-land, broken at intervals by a central range of mountains, rising in some places to the height of six or seven thousand feet (which, by some geographers, is considered as the link connecting the chains of the Andes and the Rocky Mountains of the northern and southern continents), and which separates the waters that flow on either side to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It is traversed in every direction by lateral ranges of hills, forming intermediate valleys, that extend to the coasts. The level of the country declines rapidly towards the sea-shores; they are generally low and swampy, and are intersected by lagoons. They teem with the rankest abundance of tropical vegetation, giving rise to fevers that prove fatally destructive to European constitutions. In many parts of Central America few settlements have been made by the Spanish conquerors, and large sections of it are still unvisited by strangers, and in possession of the independent Indian tribes.

The district allowed by the Spanish crown to the English, for the purposes of logwood cutting, occupies a portion of the sea-coast on the Bay of Honduras. From the unexplored and impracticable nature of the surrounding country, its boundaries have never been well defined; only a limited communication, liable to frequent interruptions, subsists between it and the adjoining Republics. The peninsula of Yucatan may be regarded as a continuation of the high-land of Guatemala; it contains two regions, differing from each other in physical character. The southern part, as far as it has been visited by travellers and settlers of European origin, is found to contain vast tracts of alluvial soil, inundated during many months of the year by the swelling of its rivers in the rainy season, and rich in all the articles of tropical produce. Here grow the immense forests of logwood and mahogany, from whence is drawn the chief supply of those articles for European consumption. Much of this district is apparently still unappropriated, or in the hands of the native Indians. A line drawn parallel to and between the 19th and 20th degrees of north latitude will describe the line of demarcation between this region and the northern half of the peninsula, where an entirely different conformation prevails. It has some remarkable physical features, and being the principal seat of the ancient remains delineated in this volume, has received more investigation than any of the neighbouring countries. The division to the north of the above-mentioned line is composed of one mass of limestone, intermixed with silicious matter; its surface is slightly undulating, and, in a few places, rising into hills, which pierce through the stratum of vegetable mould that usually covers it. In the whole of this country there is neither river, rivulet, or spring.

Though the rains are very abundant in the rainy season, the soil absorbs the whole quantity which falls, and prevents the waters from uniting and forming water-courses or springs. In the depressions some water is collected in temporary ponds, they however are soon dried up. The remains of cisterns and reservoirs, intended to remedy this want, are among the most remarkable works that we find of the ancient inhabitants; from the decay of population they have mostly been neglected or abandoned, and the country would become unfit for the residence of man or beast, if it were not for the existence of an extraordinary species of natural wells, occurring as caverns in the limestone rock, and forming a succession of passages and chambers of very great depth, at the bottom of which are usually found sources of clear and pure water from ten to twenty feet deep. They are descended by rude ladders, and the whole supply of water has to be brought up by human labour from these subterranean recesses. One of the most singular that we met with, at Bolonchen, is drawn in Plate XX., which will give a better idea of these remarkable places than any description can do. The "Senotes," as they are called, are large natural cavities in the rock, open to the sky, and water is found in them, at a depth of from twenty to one hundred feet from the level of the surrounding ground. The depth of the water is supposed to be very great. The limestone rocks supply excellent building materials, that have been equally made use of by the ancient and modern inhabitants. The Spanish towns are well and substantially built. The churches and monasteries everywhere display a solidity of structure, that bears witness to the enduring character of the religion and ecclesiastical polity imposed on the country by its conquerors. Owing to the secluded position of Yucatan, and its distance from the highways of commerce, the prevalent state of society has still much of primitive simplicity, and the two races inhabiting it are less distinct from one another in their social relations, than in the other countries once subject to Spain. The population of the towns is chiefly of Spanish extraction. The country is parcelled out in the possession of the great landholders, who spend the larger part of the year in the cities, occasionally visiting their country-houses, or Haciendas, which stand each in the centre of the surrounding domain, governed by a Major-domo, and encircled by the huts of the farm servants and their families. The mass of the rural population consists of a nation of aborigines,

called in their own language Mayas, the undoubted descendants of the people who inhabited the country at the time of its discovery by Europeans. They retain few traces of the warlike tribes, who for twenty-five years withstood the attacks of the chivalry of Spain, and more than once drove the invaders from their shores. Three centuries of mild and unoppressive servitude has reduced them to the condition of agricultural labourers, mostly attached to the great estates by a species of feudal tenure, derived from the peculiar circumstances of the land. Where the natural wells above described are wanting, the large proprietors have constructed, at a great expense, on their estates, tanks and reservoirs to supply the deficiency of water, to obtain the use of which the Mayas are obliged to come under obligations of service to the owners. The Mayas have many points of personal resemblance with the North American Indians; they still retain their language,—its structure has been investigated and explained by Spanish writers. Unfortunately for the antiquarian they are totally without historic traditions, nor is their curiosity excited by the presence of the monuments amongst which they live, to more than an indistinct feeling of religious romance and superstitious dread. The political history of Yucatan is told in a few words. From the time of the conquest it existed as a distinct captain-generalcy under the Spanish rule, and in such a state of isolation, that there is no record of its having been visited by any European traveller, from the time of the conquest until the present century. It so remained up to the era when the Mexican states acquired their independence, generally adhering to the government established in Mexico, and forming one of the States of the Mexican confederation. The Federal system of Mexico being superseded in 1835 by a Central government, the change excited discontent in Yucatan, and led to a succession of conflicts, which ended in the expulsion of the Mexicans in 1840. More lately the energies of Santa Anna have been employed in re-asserting the supremacy of Mexico, and from the latest accounts it appears that he has succeeded by negotiation in once more uniting Yucatan to that country.

The Ancient Monuments of Yucatan and Central America now claim our attention. In addition to the descriptions to each plate, I offer here a few general remarks, followed by a brief account of the principal places visited by Mr. Stephens and myself, and a sketch of the probable opinions as to their builders. The prevailing type of architecture which we are struck with throughout these regions, is the construction of immense artificial pyramidal mounds, or terraces, of greater or less height, not terminating in a point, like the Egyptian examples, but having, on their summits, platforms that support ponderous structures of hewn stone, unquestionably, in most instances, erected for purposes of a sacred character. Whether these mounds or pyramids are in general solid, or contain, in all cases, passages and apartments, is not ascertained. In the few that have been opened, by accident or design, small arched rooms have been found. The superincumbent buildings are generally long, low, arched, and of a single story in height—a style of building frequently adopted by the Spaniards, on account of the shocks of earthquakes to which many parts of the country are exposed. In a few instances, buildings of two or three stories have been met with. These “Teocalli,” or “Houses of God” (as they are still called by the Indians), abound in every part of Yucatan. In front of the temples the statues of their deities were formerly seen conspicuous; and the sacrificial stone, convex on its upper surface, so as to raise the chest of the human victim, has not in all cases disappeared.

The following account of the Mexican temples and religious sacrifices, from Prescott's “History of the Conquest of Mexico,” possesses great interest, as shewing the identity of the religious usages of the ancient inhabitants of the two neighbouring states; and derives confirmation from a comparison with the remains in Yucatan, scarcely any vestiges of such buildings now existing in Mexico Proper, owing, no doubt, to its being more directly the seat of the Spanish sway.

“The Mexican temples were called “Teocalli,” or “Houses of God,” and were very numerous. There were several hundreds in each of the principal cities, many of them, doubtless, very humble edifices. They were solid masses of earth, brick, or stone, and in their form somewhat resembled the pyramidal structures of Ancient Egypt. The bases of many of them were several hundred feet square, and they towered to a height of more than a hundred feet. They had staircases leading from the base to the summit, on which stood the temple with altars, on which fires were kept, as inextinguishable as those in the Temple of Vesta. There were said to be six hundred of these altars, on smaller buildings, within the enclosure of the great Temple of Mexico, which, with those on the sacred edifices in other parts of the city, shed a brilliant illumination over its streets through the darkest night. From the construction of their temples, all religious services were public. The long processions ascending their massive sides, as they rose higher and higher towards the summit, and the dismal rites of the sacrifice performed there, were all visible from the remotest corners of the capital, impressing on

the spectator's mind a superstitious veneration for the mysteries of his religion, and for the dread ministers by whom they were interpreted. Human sacrifices were adopted by the Aztecs, or Mexicans, early in the 14th century, about two hundred years before the conquest of Mexico. Rare at first, they became more frequent with the wider extent of their empire, till at length almost every festival was closed with this cruel abomination. One of their most important festivals was that in honour of the god Tezcatlipoca, whose rank was inferior only to that of the Supreme Being. He was called 'the soul of the world,' and supposed to have been its creator. He was depicted as a handsome man, endowed with perpetual youth. A year before the intended sacrifice, a captive, distinguished for his personal beauty, and without a blemish on his body, was selected to represent this deity. Certain tutors took charge of him, and instructed him how to perform his new part with becoming grace and dignity. He was arrayed in a splendid dress, regaled with incense, and with a profusion of sweet-scented flowers. When he went abroad he was attended by a train of the royal pages, and as he halted in the streets to play some favourite melody, the crowd prostrated themselves before him, and did him homage, as the representative of their good deity. In this way he lived an easy, luxurious life, feasted at the banquets of the principal nobles, who paid him all the honours of a divinity.

"At length the fatal day of sacrifice arrived. The term of his short-lived glories was at an end. He was stripped of his gaudy apparel, and conducted in one of the royal barges across the lake, which surrounded the capital, to a temple which rose on its margin, about a league distant. Hither the inhabitants of the capital flocked to witness the consummation of the ceremony. As the procession ascended the sides of the pyramid, the unhappy victim threw away his gay chaplet of flowers, and broke in pieces the musical instruments with which he had solaced the hours of captivity. On the summit he was received by six priests, whose long and matted locks flowed disorderly over their sable robes, covered with hieroglyphical scrolls of mystic import. They led him to the sacrificial stone, a huge block of jasper, with its upper surface somewhat convex. On this the prisoner was stretched. Five priests secured his head and his limbs, while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim with a sharp razor of *itzli*,—a volcanic substance, hard as flint,—and inserting his hand in the wound, tore out the palpitating heart. The minister of death, first holding this up towards the sun, an object of worship to the Mexicans, cast it at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was devoted, while the multitudes below prostrated themselves in humble adoration. The tragic story of this prisoner was expounded by the priests as the type of human destiny, which, brilliant in its commencement, too often closes in sorrow and disaster. The most loathsome part of the story—the manner in which the body of the sacrificed victim was disposed of—remains yet to be told. It was delivered to the warrior who had taken him in battle, and by him, after being dressed, was served up in an entertainment to his friends. This was not the coarse repast of famished cannibals, but a banquet, teeming with delicious beverages and delicate viands, prepared with art, and attended by both sexes, who conducted themselves with all the decorum of civilised life. It is stated that, in some years, twenty thousand captives were offered in sacrifice to their deities."

We thus see the dreadful purposes to which these edifices were applied, and I think there can be but one opinion as to the altars, idols, and sacrificial stones at Quirigua and Copan having been constructed and used for these dismal rites. Indeed, the channels cut on the upper surfaces of the sacrificial stones is quite conclusive on my mind as to this fact.

Another, and not less distinguishing, feature than their mounds or pyramids, are the arched rooms found in almost all the ancient buildings. I call it an arch, because it has all the appearance of one, and answers most of its purposes, and the inventors were on the very threshold of discovering the true principles of the arch. It invariably consists of stones overlaying each other from opposite walls, until the last meet over the centre of the room; or, what is still more commonly the case, when the last stones approach within about twelve inches of each other, a flat stone is laid on the top, covered either with solid masonry or concrete. The joints of the stones are all horizontal. The roofs have a slight inclination, to throw off the rain, and are cemented. This form of arch appears at first sight original, and is so, inasmuch as regards the Indians; but the same principle was used in the earliest times by the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Etrurians, and would, in all probability, suggest itself to any people who had to construct a stone roof over a space too wide for them to cover with flat stones.

We are not enabled to discriminate with any degree of certainty the original purpose of the remaining classes of ancient buildings. It is impossible to doubt, however, that some of these—as, for example, the Palace at Palenque (Plate VI.)—were intended for the chosen seats of the political and hierarchal authorities. They still (amidst ruin and neglect) show their adaptation for those great exhibitions of barbaric pomp and splendour, the occurrence of which is noticed in all the relations of the Spanish discoverers. Others, as Las Monjas, and the Casa del Gobernador, at Uxmal (Plates VIII. and X.), seem constructed for the residence of ecclesiastical communities not unlike the monastic societies of the Old World), to whom was delegated the performance of the ritual worship of the gods, and whose influence extended through the entire framework of social life. The monolithic idols at Copan may, with much probability, be referred to a period anterior to that of the Aztec domination, and have some characteristics that appear to connect them with a prior race, either the mysterious Toltecs, whose disappearance from Mexico took place within the range of historic record, and who spread themselves over the regions of Central America, or the still earlier people whose country they occupied in their migrations. One of the most singular facts attending the consideration of the arts of the people by whom these buildings were erected, is the certainty that they were unacquainted with the use of iron; this is expressly asserted by the Spaniards, and we find no reason to doubt its truth. Masses of meteoric iron, indeed, are met with in all parts of the American continent; but the natives were ignorant of the process of working this metal, and, in lieu of it, used copper instruments, hardened by the admixture of tin, or some other alloy. Their buildings of stone, and sculptures in granite, were worked with copper tools; and besides having a perfect knowledge of the processes of stone-cutting and laying, they were well acquainted with various kinds of mortars, stuccoes, and cements, and large masses of excellent “concrete,” as it is technically termed, are found in many of their buildings; they were, in fact, so far as regards the mechanical part, accomplished masons. In another department of the arts, indicating a higher degree of civilisation than that exhibited in the erection of pyramids and temples, they had made a remarkable advance. I allude to the art of painting, and the preparation, mixing, and use of pigments. Their painting is, indeed, superior to their architecture and sculpture: like the same art amongst the ancient Egyptians, it was applied for purposes of architectural decoration. In the blending of various colours, they had attained a step beyond the practice of that nation, approaching more nearly to the less severe style of art found in the frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Such an assertion may seem to need some corroborative proof: I regret that it is not at present in my power to offer any. These remains, from the very fragility of their nature, have, in too many cases, utterly perished. In one place only, at Chichen Itza, were we gratified with the discovery of large specimens of them, though it is probable that they formed part of the ornaments of every building of consequence when in a perfect state. At this spot, where of all others I desired the full possession of health and strength, I was incapacitated by severe illness and fever from delineating them, and was obliged to leave these most interesting objects to the mercy of accident and wanton outrage, to which they may before this time have fallen victims.

I should mention, however, that in one of the rooms of a large building at Chichen Itza, are paintings covering the entire walls, from the floor to the ceiling. The apartment (I speak from recollection) may be twenty-five feet long, ten feet wide, and fifteen feet high. The figures are not more than six to eight inches in height; but most interesting subjects are represented, abounding with life, animation, and nature. In one place are seen warriors preparing for battle; in another the fight is at its height: castles are attacked, defended, and taken, and various military punishments follow. This forms one section of the wall. In another are labours of husbandry—planting, sowing, and reaping; and the cultivation of fruits and flowers. Then follow domestic scenes, and others apparently of a mythological nature; indeed, almost everything requisite to give us an intimate acquaintance with Indian life is depicted. The subjects are too numerous to mention, and such was the multitude of figures and objects, that a month would not have sufficed for copying them, and they gave me a much higher opinion of the state of civilisation among the Indians than I had previously entertained. Unfortunately, these beautiful specimens of art are fast hastening to decay, and every day adds to their approaching obliteration.

I will now give a brief outline of the chief points of interest visited by Mr. Stephens and myself.

The first place we attempted to reach was Copan, in the state of Honduras, to which our attention had been drawn by the account of the late Colonel Galindo, a Spanish officer, in the service of the Republic of Central America.

We sought in vain for information until we arrived at Gualan, within fifty miles of it. The Padre, or Catholic priest, had been there many years before, but his accounts were so improbable, and evidently drawn so much from a lively imagination, that we much doubted whether it were worth while to go there at all. By a singular perversion of this gentleman's mind, or by a sad defect in his memory, he minutely described things which could not exist, and never mentioned a single one of the many curious objects that meet the traveller's gaze on wandering over the ruins of this city. When arrived almost within sight of them, we had unforeseen difficulties to encounter; for some time no guide could be found, and at the only house where we could be lodged (there being no inns in the country), we were inhospitably received. To the praise of the Spaniards, be it said, it was the only instance of the kind we met with in our long journey. Mr. Stephens very truly remarks, "Don Gregorio's house had two sides to it, an inside and an out," to which latter he graciously gave us free access, by securely bolting his door, on retiring to rest, and then wishing us good night. I mention this circumstance to show the difficulties travellers may meet with in visiting these countries, and the perseverance necessary to overcome them.

COPAN may be called the City of Idols, as it abounds with monolithic statues of Indian deities. It stands on the bank of a river, and was surrounded by walls; that on the river-side is still, in places, from sixty to ninety feet in height. The remains of a vast temple, or collection of sacred edifices, lie scattered about, together with innumerable fragments of mutilated ornaments and statues. The most remarkable of the idols are delineated in Plates I., III., IV., and V. They are about twelve feet in height and four feet square; the front and back being, in general, representations of human figures, habited in a most singular manner, with towering head-dresses of feathers and skins of animals, the necks adorned with necklaces, the ears with ear-rings, and the feet with sandals, like those of the ancient Romans. The sides are carved with hieroglyphics, which no one has yet been able to decipher. They were all painted. There are no remains of arched buildings here, though no doubt such formerly existed; but immense pyramidal mounds and terraced walls are met with to a great distance in the surrounding forests. If the intelligent Padre of Gualan dealt in the marvellous, it is not surprising that the ignorant Indians went far beyond him; I heard wonderful accounts of the Cave of Tibulco, but all my efforts to reach this abode of the genii were unavailing.

QUIRIGUA is the next place of interest in this part of the country; but we did not hear of it for some weeks after our arrival. It is within six miles of the high road we had passed in going to Gualan, and yet, with all our inquiries for ruined cities, no one seemed to be acquainted with it. It is in many respects similar to Copan, but probably more ancient. It consists of ruined mounds and terraces, with many colossal statues, deeply buried in the entanglement of a tropical forest. Some of the statues are twenty-six feet in height, of a single stone; the sculpture is in lower relief than at Copan; and, as usual, there are numerous hieroglyphics. I regretted exceedingly not being able to make other than slight sketches of these remarkable monuments; but I was alone, and the difficulties were too great to be overcome single-handed. In order to reach the ruins, I had to descend a rapid and dangerous river in a small rickety canoe, and then cut a path, for a mile, through a forest, such as none can fully understand who have not been in a tropical country. The distance which, in descending the river, was performed in an hour, required four in ascending; so that the greater part of the day was taken up in going and returning.

At SANTA CRUZ DEL QUICHE, are ruins of vast extent, but so dilapidated, that little remains for the draughtsman. It was here that we first heard of the mysterious Indian city, still existing in all its Pagan splendour, in the midst of a country not yet visited by white man. We were strongly tempted to try the adventure, but prudential motives, and the advanced state of the season, prevented us. From subsequent inquiries, in distant parts of the country, I have little doubt but that such a city exists, but the danger of reaching it would be great.

At OCOSINGO, we met with the arch before alluded to, with the usual accompaniments of mounds and terraces, and an ornament over one of the doorways, not unlike the winged globe of Egypt.

PALENQUE, in Chiapas, the most southern province of Mexico, is better known than any other of the ruined American cities: my notice of it will therefore be short. It was probably abandoned, and in ruins, when Cortes passed near it, in his celebrated march from Mexico to Honduras, as no mention is made of it in his despatches. The principal building is (with reason, I think) called the Palace. It stands on an artificial mound, whose base is three

hundred and ten feet by two hundred and sixty feet, and forty feet high, with staircases on the four sides. The building itself measures two hundred and twenty-eight feet by one hundred and eighty feet, twenty-five feet high, and is of one story. The front and rear have each fourteen doorways, and eleven on each end. The piers dividing the doorways still present traces of admirable stuccoes, which were painted. The interior is divided into three court-yards, with a tower in one of them. Every part appears to have been elaborately decorated with sculpture in stone, stuccoes, and paintings. In several of the apartments, which have the usual triangular arch, I noticed that the walls had been painted several times, as traces of earlier subjects were discernible where the outer coat of paint had been destroyed. The paintings were of the same nature as the frescoes of Italy,—water-colours applied to cement. The other buildings are inferior in size to the Palace, but all on high mounds, richly decorated with numerous stone tablets of hieroglyphics, and sculptures of figures well executed, which have awakened a lively interest in the antiquarian world. The whole is shrouded in the depths of a tropical forest, which has to be cleared away at every fresh visit of the traveller. Casts were made of the most interesting sculptures, which were subsequently seized by the agents of the Mexican government, and are doubtless ere this destroyed. Plates VI. and VII. will assist the reader in obtaining an idea of this remarkable place.

We now come to the ruins of UXMAL, in Yucatan, which, for their vast extent, their variety, and being for the most part in good preservation, may claim precedence in this Province of any other remains of antiquity. They impressed my mind at the first glance with the same feelings of wonder and admiration, with which I first caught sight of the ruins of Thebes. I will not institute a comparison between Uxmal and the “World’s great Empress on the Egyptian Plain,” but still the several Teocalli, rising higher than any buildings at Thebes—the gigantic terraces supporting immense and solid structures of stone—the vast amount of sculptured decorations, and the novelty and intricacy of the designs—all tend to impress the beholder with sentiments of awe and admiration.

The “Casa de las Monjas,” or House of the Nuns, is a building forming four sides of a square, and inclosing a court-yard, about three hundred feet each way. Each of the four buildings shows a different design, so also do the rear fronts and the ends, presenting no less than sixteen different façades. All were richly decorated and painted; their present appearance is represented in the Plates XIV. and XV. From these a judgment may be formed of the entire building when in a perfect state, each ornament and moulding relieved by rich and vivid colours, and portions probably gilt. The effect must have been gorgeous in the extreme.

The grand Teocallis, called by the Indians the “House of the Diviner,” stood to the eastward of the last-mentioned building, and within a hundred yards of it. The pyramidal part rose to the height of a hundred feet above the plain, with two noble flights of stairs leading to the platform on the top. Here stood the building represented in the Plates XI. and XII., and I will not attempt to explain by words what is better understood from inspecting the design: viewed from all parts, this edifice was singularly beautiful and graceful.

The “Casa del Gobernador,” or House of the Governor, is next in importance. This immense building is constructed entirely of hewn stone, and measures three hundred and twenty feet in front, by forty feet in depth; the height is about twenty-six feet. It has eleven doorways in front, and one at each end. The apartments are narrow, seldom exceeding twelve feet, just large enough to swing a hammock, which was, and still is, the substitute for beds throughout the country. Some of the rooms are long, measuring sixty feet, and twenty-three feet high. There does not appear to have been any internal decoration, nor are there any windows. The lower part of the edifice is of plain wrought stone, but the upper part is singularly rich in ornament, as delineated in Plates IX. and X. Taking the front, the ends, and the rear of the building, we have a length of seven hundred and fifty-two feet of elaborate carving, on which traces of painting are still visible. The peculiar arch of the country has been employed in every room. The lintels of the doorways were of wood, a more costly but less durable material than stone, and from its hardness more difficult to be worked.

Unfortunately they have all decayed, and the masonry they supported has fallen down, and much of the beauty of the building is thus destroyed. The Casa del Gobernador stands on three terraces; the lowest is three feet high, fifteen feet wide, and five hundred and seventy-five feet long; the second is twenty feet high, two hundred and fifty feet wide, and five hundred and forty-five feet long; and the third is nineteen feet high, thirty feet broad, and three hundred

and sixty feet long. They are all of stone, and in a tolerable state of preservation. These are the principal buildings at Uxmal, and the others are much inferior in size and condition.

We found at KABAII, in addition to richly-decorated façades, some very curious specimens of internal decoration (see Plate XVII.); at ZAYI, an immense edifice, of three stories in height; at LABNAH, a handsome gateway, of which a drawing will be found at Plate XIX.; at BOLONCHEN, a natural curiosity in a deep subterranean well, the descent to which is by long ranges of ladders, of dangerous construction (see Plate XX.); at CHICHEN ITZA, ruins little inferior in extent or interest to those of Uxmal (a drawing of a façade of one of the buildings is given in Plate XXI.); at TULOOM, a walled city, of which there are two drawings (Plates XXIII. and XXIV.); at IZAMAL, some large mounds and a colossal head (Plate XXV.); and, finally, at AKÉ, a collection of large stones on a high mound, not unlike a Druidical monument.

It is impossible to survey the monuments now described without feeling some curiosity respecting the people by whom they were built, and the state of society which led to their erection. Nor has the question been unproductive of discussion, though hitherto a desire to theorise has preceded a complete and accurate survey of the monuments themselves, from whence the only safe foundations for theory can be derived. Two circumstances may be noted in all the writers who have made researches on this topic—a general, and, perhaps, natural, wish to carry their antiquity up to a very early period, and a constant effort to connect them, in any possible way, with the history and traditions of the Old World. Thus, the work of Lord Kingsborough (unquestionably the most splendid example of private munificence ever applied to the promotion of antiquarian literature) appears to owe its origin chiefly to the author's conviction in the truth of his favourite hypothesis,—the colonisation of America by the lost tribes of Israel. Other writers have even attributed them to an antediluvian period. Waldeck, a careful explorer of these ruins, infers, from the growth of trees and the accumulation of vegetable soil in some of the court-yards at Palenque, that they cannot be less than from two thousand to three thousand years old. My own observations have led me to differ from these conclusions, and to consider them as founded on insufficient data.

The growth of tropical trees has not been sufficiently studied to make them a safe criterion to judge of the age of monuments; and the only trees of large dimensions I met with, were those of quick growth; one, in the village of Ticul, of six feet diameter, having attained that size in thirty years, as I was informed by the person who planted it. I am, moreover, inclined to the opinion that very ancient trees are not to be met with in tropical latitudes; and that rapid decay generally, or always, accompanies rapid growth. The accumulation of vegetable mould to the depth of nine feet, is another proof that has been adduced in favour of the high antiquity of the buildings where it occurs; and, doubtless, in a northern climate, it would indicate a remote age, but not so in the tropics; vegetation there is so rank and rapid, that within less than twelve months from our first visit to Uxmal, we found the whole place so overgrown with shrubs and small trees, that nothing but the high teocalli and the outline of the other monuments were visible, and a thick deposit of vegetable mould covered the places we had so short a time before cleared away. I have met with no physical marks, surely indicating a high antiquity; on the contrary, the whole course of my observations have led me to form an opposite opinion. It is true there are mishapen mounds, so utterly destroyed that they might belong to any time or any people; but I have little doubt that excavations would prove them to have been built by cognate races to those who inhabited the country at the time of the conquest. It is also proved, by undoubted testimony, that many of the buildings we now see in ruins, were in use by the Indians at the time of the Spanish invasion. I do not think we should be safe in ascribing to any of the monuments (which still retain their form) a greater age than from eight hundred to one thousand years; and those which are perfect enough to be delineated, I think it likely are not more than from four to six hundred years old. The roots of trees and the tropical rains are the chief elements of destruction, and daily and hourly is the work going on. Another century will hardly have elapsed, before the whole of these interesting monuments will have become indistinguishable heaps of ruins.

With regard to the various theories that have been formed to trace the nations that peopled the American continent, through their migrations, to their original habitations in the Old World, we find them all resting for support upon a few vague similarities of rites and customs, more or less common amongst every branch of the human family. Besides, the idea that civilisation, and its attendant arts, is in every case *derivative*, and always owing to a

transmission from a cultivated to an unpolished people, is eminently unphilosophical, as it only removes further back, without explaining the original difficulty of *invention*, which must somewhere have taken place; and if at any time in one country, undoubtedly a similar train of circumstances may have led to similar results in another. The latest writer on this subject (Mr. Prescott) has come to the conclusion, after a dispassionate and unprejudiced view of the existing evidence, that though "the coincidences are sufficiently strong to authorise a belief that the civilisation of Anahuac (ancient Mexico) was in some degree influenced by Eastern Asia, yet the discrepancies are so great as to carry back the communication to a very remote period, so remote, that this foreign influence has been too feeble to interfere materially with the growth of what may be regarded, in its essential features, as a peculiar and indigenous civilisation." The results arrived at by Mr. Stephens and myself, after a full and precise comparative survey of the ancient remains, coincide with this opinion, and are briefly:—that they are not of immemorial antiquity, the work of unknown races; but that, as we now see them, they were occupied, and possibly erected, by the Indian tribes in possession of the country at the time of the Spanish conquest,—that they are the production of an indigenous school of art, adapted to the natural circumstances of the country, and to the civil and religious polity then prevailing,—and that they present but very slight and accidental analogies with the works of any people or country in the Old World. The reader will find the general argument ably treated in the "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan," Vol. II. I will content myself with a few illustrative remarks.

1st. These buildings coincide, in the minutest particulars, with the descriptions of the old Spanish historians, and contemporary chroniclers of the conquest, who speak with wonder and astonishment of the stately stone buildings that met their eyes in their progress through the country; and we often read of them in connection with commendations bestowed on the praiseworthy zeal which caused their devastation, and the almost entire destruction of all traces of Mexican civilisation. So completely was this effected, that we find the historian, Robertson, writing—"At this day there does not remain the smallest vestige of any Indian building, public or private, in Mexico, or any province of New Spain." The fallacy of this assertion is too obvious to need remark; coming from a respectable source, it gained credence, and has tended to needlessly obscure the true facts.

2nd. The architectural remains in Yucatan testify to the existence of a state of society, which, from other sources, we know to have prevailed in the neighbouring countries. Reasoning, *a priori*, from a survey of these ruins, and putting out of view the historical information at our command, it is obvious,—that, in the construction of these stupendous works, at a period when the mechanical resources for facilitating labour were imperfectly known, immense numbers of artisans must have been employed,—that these works are not of apparent utility, or such as would suggest themselves to the spontaneous and undirected energies of a nation, but that there must have existed a supreme, and probably despotic, power, with authority sufficient to wield and direct the exertions of a subordinate population to purposes subservient to the display of civil or religious pomp and splendour,—that, for the sustenance of masses of people thus brought in contact, a certain progress must have been attained in the agricultural and economic sciences,—that many experiments must have failed, and many attempts been made, before the degree of proficiency in building, sculpture, and painting, which we now see, was reached,—and that, in a country where only the rudest means of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another was employed, it is probable the traditionary facts acquired by experience would be preserved by a sacred caste or tribe of priests, by whom, and for whose use, many of these buildings were undoubtedly erected. All these circumstances (and the same train of reasoning might be pursued to a much greater extent), existed in the civilisation of ancient Mexico. They were found by the Spaniards a numerous and thickly settled people, in possession of all the necessities, and many of the comforts, of life, governed with absolute power by their king or cazique, and subject to the domination of a powerful hierarchy,—the sole depositories of scientific knowledge, and pervading with their influence every relation of social life.

3rd. Architecturally considered, the ancient buildings of Yucatan show many features which imply an aboriginal character, derived from an imitation of natural objects. In Herrera's "Account of Yucatan" we find it remarked, "that there were so many and such stately stone buildings that it was amazing, and the greatest wonder was that, having no use of any metal, they were able to raise such structures, which seem to have been temples, for their houses were all of timber and thatched." This original style of house (in use, no doubt, from the earliest period, and

still found exclusively in Indian villages,—the walls constructed of bamboo canes, or trunks of trees, placed upright, and bound together by withes, with lattice-work apertures for windows, and an over-hanging, heavily-thatched roof), seems to have been the prototype of much that we find peculiar among the ornamental architectural work of the country. If the Vitruvian theory, by which the characteristic forms of the early Grecian temples are traced to the influence of their original timber construction, be correct, a similar inference may fairly be drawn in this instance. The peculiarities of imitation are most evident in the plainer (and, no doubt, earlier) buildings; these, as less generally interesting, are not included in the illustrations of the present work. A reference to the plates of the second volume of Stephens' "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan," which represent the ruins of Chunhuhu, Kewick, Sabachtsché, Zayi, and many others, will show more clearly than the most laboured description, the fact that is now stated.

4th. The old Spanish and native historians inform us, that a nation, called the Toltecs, coming from the north, entered and took possession of the great valley in which the city of Mexico stands, about the close of the seventh century. We shall for ever remain in ignorance of the history of this people (except from such slight accounts and traditions as have come down to us through their successors, the Mexicans), unless we succeed in deciphering the hieroglyphic writing found at Palenque, Copan, and other places; and which seem to indicate an advance beyond the mere picture-writing of the Mexicans, being evidently compound characters, formed by abbreviation of the original pictorial signs, like the Chinese characters at the present day. The Mexicans described the Toltecs to the Spanish conquerors as having been well acquainted with agriculture, the mechanic arts, and working in metals. After holding sway for four hundred years, they disappeared before the more ferocious Aztecs, or Mexicans, who are said to have come from the north-west. The Toltecs, it is supposed, went to the south and east, taking possession of Central America and Yucatan, entering the latter by way of Honduras and Bacalar, first founding the cities of Quirigua and Copan. The period when they entered Yucatan is not known, nor am I inclined to place much reliance on the dates before-mentioned. At all events, it is probable that the Toltecs and their descendants erected the buildings we have been considering; and the Mexicans, or Aztecs, adopted the arts and civilisation of their predecessors, used the same method of astronomical calculation, and were probably, in all essential peculiarities, a kindred race.

PLATE I.

IDOL, AT COPAN.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The ruined city of Copan being described in general terms in the Introduction, it is only necessary here to enter into more minute detail as regards the monolithic statues, or idols, which form her characteristic feature. The Plate gives a front view of one of the most perfect of a group of eleven. They were all deeply buried amidst tropical trees when first discovered, and it was with no small difficulty that a sufficient space was cleared away to admit of a drawing being made. The Idol is carved out of a single block of compact limestone, and measures eleven feet eight inches in height, and three feet four inches on each side, standing on a pedestal six feet square. It is surrounded by a circular stone curb or rim, measuring, in its outer diameter, sixteen feet six inches. A sacrificial stone, or altar, stands in front of it, at a distance of eight feet ten inches, but is not introduced into the drawing, as it would have hidden the lower part of the figure. It is placed diagonally towards the Idol, measuring seven feet across. There is every probability (from the deep groovings, or channels, on all the altars) that they were used for the immolation of human victims. The Idol, viewed in front, represents a woman of middle age, with the arms curiously raised and bent before her; the wrists are adorned with bracelets of beads, and the neck profusely covered with necklaces; on either side of the head descends a tress of hair; the ears are large, unnatural in their shape, and are decorated with ear-drops; immediately over the forehead appears a row of beads attached to the hair. The head-dress is not easy to describe: it is very lofty, and one of its peculiarities is a skull, or upper part of the head of some animal, the lower jaw being wanting. Whether the remainder of the head-dress is intended to represent feathers, or flowers, or a mixture of the two, is doubtful. The lower part of the dress has the appearance of a cotton robe (cotton being indigenous to the country, and much used), ornamented with chequer work, and fringed with beads. The feet are clothed in sandals of precisely the same form as are found in some of the old Roman statues; they appear to have been a conspicuous part of the dress. The sides of the Idol have rows of hieroglyphics, and the back is as elaborately carved as the front, but the subject is totally different. It presents a mask, surrounded by complicated ornaments, with a gracefully disposed border, and, at the base, rows of hieroglyphics.

PLATE II.

PYRAMIDAL BUILDING AND FRAGMENTS OF SCULPTURE,
AT COPAN.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

This drawing represents one of the most remarkable and perfect monuments at Copan. It is a pyramidal structure, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, part of an immense terraced mound. The top, being broad and level, was probably used as a foundation for small temples, or for statues, though no traces of the former remain; and of the latter, the fragments are so much shattered, that it is impossible to ascertain where they originally stood. The height of the pyramidal terrace is about thirty-five feet; it is composed of small stones, well laid in mortar, and when in a perfect state was encrusted with a coating of stucco. Several fragments of sculptured ornament have been introduced into the foreground of this Plate, though found at some distance from the building. The colossal skull of a monkey is seen in the left-hand corner: it was, perhaps, an object of worship. The monkey tribe inhabit the forests of Copan in great numbers, and may frequently be seen watching attentively the movements of the traveller, or leaping from branch to branch on the tops of the high trees, causing a noise like the rushing of a fierce wind. In the foreground is a round altar, or sacrificial stone, with the grooves visible, by which, probably, the blood of the victim ran to the ground. Standing against the tree is the bust of a warrior, or cacique; and next to it, the portrait of some distinguished chieftain. The head-dress is unfortunately broken. To the right of the picture are the feet and sandals of a statue, which, in point of design and workmanship, would not have disgraced a Roman artist of the olden time.

PLATE III.

BACK OF AN IDOL, AT COPAN.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

The subject of this Plate is the back of one of the stone Idols at Copan. The design consists of five wreaths, enclosing hieroglyphics. They are sculptured with the greatest care, and traces of red paint are in some places just discernible. The outer border appears intended to represent leaves tied together with ribbon, forming bows. The whole composition is at once chaste and elegant, and very unlike the generality of the sculpture at Copan, which would seem rather intended to inspire fear and horror than any gentler emotion; this, on the contrary, is so graceful and pleasing, that instead of human sacrifices, it may well be supposed that nothing but fruits and flowers were offered before it. The entanglement of a tropical forest is given in the back-ground.

PLATE IV.

BROKEN IDOL, AT COPAN.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

This Idol, in its ruined state, is one of the most beautiful in Copan; and in workmanship, is equal to the best remains of Egyptian art. Its present condition may give some idea of the scene of desolation and ruin presented at Copan. The whole region is an overgrown forest; and, amidst the prostration and wreck of buildings and terraces, one "Idol" is seen displaced from its pedestal by monstrous roots,—another locked in the close embrace of branches of trees, and almost lifted out of the earth,—and another hurled to the ground, and bound down by large vines and creepers: of this, the fallen part was thus completely bound to the earth, and, before it could be drawn, it was necessary to unlace them, and tear the fibres out of the crevices.

This fallen statue is of about the same dimensions with the others. The paint is very perfect, and has preserved the stone, which makes it more to be regretted that it is broken. The altar is buried, with the top barely visible, which, by excavating, we made out to represent the back of a tortoise.

PLATE V.

IDOL AND ALTAR, AT COPAN.

ON STONE, BY W. PARROTT.

In this Plate, the altar, or sacrificial stone, forms the principal object in the fore-ground. It is three feet six inches high, above the ground, and measures seven feet from angle to angle. It is sculptured into four hideous heads of colossal size, having enormous fangs, and distended eyes, adding, no doubt, the finishing horror to the bloody sacrifices which there can be little doubt were enacted on it. Certain channels (now nearly obliterated) exist on its upper surface, to carry off the blood of the human victim; and to render the operation of cutting open the breast, and tearing out the heart more easy, the upper surface of the stone is slightly convex, agreeing with the accounts of the early Spanish discoverers. It was painted red, a fitting colour for so sanguinary a ritual. The Idol, to whom the sacrifice was offered, stands at a distance of twelve feet from the sacrificial stone. It

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is eleven feet nine inches high, and three feet square, cut out of a single block of stone, and has elaborate carvings on the back and sides. It is conjectured to be the portrait of some deified hero or chieftain, from certain traces of individuality in the features. There are remains of a beard and moustache, and the whole figure is enveloped and overladen with a complicated dress and head ornaments. It stands at the foot of a pyramidal terrace, or wall, which probably supported a sacred edifice.

PLATE VI.

GENERAL VIEW OF PALENQUE.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The ruins of Palenque are the first which awakened attention to the existence of ancient and unknown cities in America.

They lie twelve miles distant, in a south-easterly direction from Palenque, the last village northward in the State of Chiapas. They have no other name than that of the village near which they are situated, but in the neighbourhood they are called "Las Casas de Piedra," or, "the Houses of Stone."

The extent of the ruins is not very great,—at least, so far as we were able to survey; and we visited all the buildings mentioned by Del Rio and Dupaix. A square space, one thousand yards each way, would include them all; but the extent of ground is apparently much larger, which deception, no doubt, arises from the difficulty and time required to pass from one spot to another, from the extreme denseness of the tropical vegetation.

The largest and most important structure is called the Palace,—seen to the left in the drawing. The principal front faces the east, and is the opposite one to that shown by the drawing. It measures two hundred and twenty-eight feet, and the same on the rear. The two side-fronts each measure one hundred and eighty feet. Its height does not exceed twenty-five feet, and all around it had a bold projecting cornice of stone. It stands on an artificial mound, forty feet high, three hundred and ten feet front and rear, and two hundred and sixty feet on each side. These are its principal dimensions. The front and rear had each fourteen doorways, and the ends, eleven. The openings are about nine feet wide, and the piers between six and seven feet. The entire building was of stone, stuccoed and painted, with spirited bas reliefs on the piers, and projecting borders of hieroglyphics, and other ornaments. It had three principal court-yards, the largest of which is given in the following Plate. There are several interesting portions of stone sculpture, and of paintings in colours, connected with this building; the latter, especially, is being fast obliterated by the excessive dampness prevailing the greater part of the year. The vegetation, at the time of our visit, was close and rank, and it was not without considerable labour, in the cutting away of trees, that the entire design of the building could be made out.

In the fore-ground of the drawing is seen an elevated pyramidal mound, which appears once to have had steps on all its sides. These steps have been thrown down by the growth of trees, making the ascent very difficult. The mound, measured on the slope, is one hundred and ten feet. On the platform, at top, is a stone Casa, or House, seventy-six feet in front, and twenty-five feet deep. It has doors and piers still standing, the end piers being ornamented with hieroglyphics, and the centre ones with figures. The interior of the building is divided into two corridors, running lengthwise, with ceilings formed of over-lapping stones, rising nearly to a point, and floors paved with large square stones. The corridors are each seven feet wide, separated by a massive wall, and the back one divided into three chambers. The centre room contains a stone tablet of hieroglyphics, and there are two others in the front corridor. The roof is inclined, and the sides are covered with stucco ornaments, now much broken, but enough remains to show that it must, when perfect, have been rich and imposing. On the top was a range of small square piers, covered by a layer of flat projecting stones, which gives it the appearance of a low open balustrade.

The two Casas in the distance, and to the right of the high mound, are very similar in construction to the one just described. They were richly ornamented both with sculpture and painting, as also with works in stucco. Each stands on its respective mound, with stone staircases, now overgrown with trees and shrubs. There are two other Casas of smaller dimensions, but so much ruined that little more than their outline remains.

The high hill, in the back-ground of the picture, appeared so regular that, but for its great height (nearly one thousand feet), we should have supposed it artificial. On the summit are the remains of an ancient structure.

It is due to the reader to state, that this general view of Palenque is composed of separate sketches of each Casa, or Building, and from the ground-plan each is made to occupy its respective position. No other method could be adopted, as the large size of the trees, and dense nature of the forest, precluded any idea of making a clearing sufficient to embrace them all in one view. The clearing is, therefore, not real, but imaginary. The remainder of the drawing may be considered as quite faithful.

PLATE VII. (UPPER SUBJECT.)

PRINCIPAL COURT OF THE PALACE AT PALENQUE.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

In the preceding Plate, a distant view of the Palace at Palenque is given. The present drawing represents a portion of the principal court-yard, which is eighty feet long, and seventy wide, and surrounded on the four sides with open corridors. A portion of this corridor is given in the Plate; each opening is nine feet wide, and the piers six feet. These latter are of stone, covered with stucco, and ornamented with figures, painted. The lintels were of wood, and have in all cases fallen. The superincumbent masonry was covered with stuccoed ornaments, now nearly obliterated. We found large trees growing on the roofs. A flight of stone steps, thirty feet broad, leads down into the court-yard (see Plate). On either side of the steps are grim and gigantic figures, carved on stone, in basso relievo, nine feet high, inclined back towards the corridor at the same angle as the steps. The attitudes of the figures are constrained and awkward, but not altogether destitute of expression. Two of the figures have hieroglyphics carved on what appear to be aprons suspended from their waists, and all have ornamental head-dresses, with necklaces, ear-rings, &c.

PLATE VII. (LOWER SUBJECT.)

INTERIOR OF CASA, No. III., PALENQUE.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

This Interior is given with a view of showing the peculiar triangular arch of the country, formed of stones, each projecting beyond the other, until at last they nearly meet at top, and are covered by a flat stone. The ancient manner of hanging doors is also seen. Semicircular holes were cut in the door jambs, holding small round stones, on which, by a simple contrivance, the doors might be made to turn. The building measures, on the outside, thirty-eight feet by twenty-eight, and stands on a lofty mound. It has three doorways leading to a corridor, thirty-two feet long by nine feet wide, which communicates with three rooms; the centre one measures eighteen feet by nine feet, and contains some interesting bas reliefs, beautifully cut in stone. The whole exterior of the front was richly ornamented with painted stuccoes.

PLATE VIII.

GENERAL VIEW OF LAS MONJAS, AT UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY J. C. BOURNE.

This view is taken from the upper terrace of the Governor's House (Casa del Gobernador), looking northwards. It embraces the whole of the buildings called "Las Monjas" (or the "Nuns"), forming the centre distance of the drawing. This building is quadrangular, with a court-yard in the centre, two hundred and fourteen feet wide, and two hundred and fifty-eight feet deep. The centre building, and the most distant, is two hundred and sixty-four feet long, standing on a terrace twenty feet high; and above the cornice, from one end to the other, it was ornamented with sculpture.—(For a specimen, see Plate XV.) The ascent to the terrace is by a grand, but ruined staircase, ninety-five feet wide, having ruined buildings on either side. The height to the second cornice is twenty-five feet, and the highest portions were forty-two feet. The stone carving was most elaborate. There are several statues remaining on this front, representing players on musical instruments. The instruments resemble the modern harp and guitar. The back front was also elaborately ornamented, and several of the figures and the decorations still remain. This building encloses one of older date; the doorways, walls, and wooden lintels of the latter are all seen, and a richly ornamented cornice is visible where the outer building is destroyed. The front had fourteen outer doorways, and fourteen inner doorways, leading to twenty-eight rooms, all of which are covered with the triangular arch. The building which forms the right, or eastern side of the quadrangle, is one hundred and fifty-eight feet long, with five doorways and fourteen rooms, richly decorated on the exterior and ends. The edifice on the left, or western side, is one hundred and seventy-three feet long, with seven doorways and fourteen rooms. On the façade are the remains of a colossal serpent.—(See Plate XIV.) This interesting subject is, unfortunately, in a most dilapidated state, and the little that remains is in such a tottering condition, that a few more rainy seasons will probably prostrate the whole. The front centre building is two hundred and seventy-nine feet long, having twenty doorways and as many rooms. In the centre is an arched doorway, ten feet eight inches wide, which leads into the great court-yard, and was apparently the only entrance to it. The façades of this building are not so richly ornamented with sculpture as either of the others; but they possess a chasteness and simplicity which give them a peculiar interest.

On the right of the drawing is seen the great Teocallis, or the Diviner's House, surmounted by a building described at Plate XII.; and just beneath it, westward, is the gateway described in Plate XI. There were staircases both on the east and west sides of this Teocallis.

PLATE IX.

ORNAMENT OVER THE PRINCIPAL DOORWAY, CASA DEL GOBERNADOR, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY W. PARROTT.

The "Casa del Gobernador," or House of the Governor, is one of the most extensive and important of the ancient buildings at Uxmal, in Yucatan. It is constructed entirely of hewn stone, and measures three hundred and twenty feet in front, by forty feet in depth. The height is about twenty-six feet. It has eleven doorways in front, and one at each end. The apartments are narrow, seldom exceeding twelve feet, just large enough to swing a hammock, which was, and still is, the substitute for beds throughout the country. Some of the rooms measure sixty feet in length, and are twenty-three feet high. There does not appear to have been any internal decoration in the chambers, nor are there any windows. The lower part of the edifice is of plain wrought stone, but the upper portion is singularly rich in ornament,—a fragment of it is shown in the drawing. Taking the front, the ends, and the rear of the building, there is a length of seven hundred and fifty-two feet of elaborate carving, on which traces of colour are still visible. The peculiar arch of the country has been employed in every room. The lintels of the doorways were of wood, a more costly material to work than stone, but less durable. Unfortunately they have all decayed, and the masonry they supported has, in places, fallen down (see Plate), and much of the beauty of the building is thus destroyed. The central ornament over the principal doorway was a seated figure, of which but slight traces remain. The head-dress of feathers is more perfect, and appears totally disproportioned to the size of the figure. On either side are parallel bars of stone, between which are well sculptured hieroglyphics. The cornice was perhaps intended to represent

the coilings of a serpent; it is continued from one extremity of the building to the other, and goes entirely round it. The Casa del Gobernador stands on three terraces, the lowest is three feet high, fifteen feet wide, and five hundred and seventy-five feet long; the second is twenty feet high, two hundred and fifty feet wide, and five hundred and forty-five feet long; and the third is nineteen feet high, thirty feet broad, and three hundred and sixty feet long. They are all of stone, and in a tolerably good state of preservation.

PLATE X.

ARCHWAY; CASA DEL GOBERNADOR, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

Within about sixty feet of either end of the Casa del Gobernador, are situated the arched gateways,—of which one is shown in the drawing. They appear to have been blocked-up by the original builders, as the style of the masonry is precisely similar to that of other parts of the edifice. The triangular arch is distinctly seen, forming the prominent feature of the design. At the angles are hideous masks, one over the other, the projecting trunk, or proboscis, being in the place of the nose. An elegant ornament is carved on either side of the arch, very similar to those found on Greek and Roman buildings. The twisted cable, or rope ornament, is also of frequent occurrence in Yucatan; it is to be found, I believe, in all countries which have made any advance in the art of building. The portion represented in this drawing may be considered as a continuation of the last Plate. They both form a part of the great façade of the Governor's House, and are not less remarkable for their novelty of design, than for their beautiful workmanship.

PLATE XI.

GATEWAY OF THE GREAT TEOCALLIS, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY T. S. BOYS.

The great Teocallis at Uxmal is called, by the Indians, the "House of the Diviner;" and also the "Dwarf's House." It is a lofty pyramidal mound, about two hundred and thirty-five feet long, by a breadth of one hundred and fifty-five feet. Its height is eighty-eight feet, and to the top of the building, one hundred and five feet. At the height of sixty feet is a solid projecting platform, formerly reached by a steep flight of steps, now thrown down. On this platform stands the gateway represented in the drawing. It measures twenty-two feet in front, and is twenty-two feet high, and was most elaborately adorned with sculptured stone-work. The ornaments are of similar design to those of the Casa del Gobernador, but executed perhaps with a greater degree of delicacy. The remains of two statues are seen, and most likely the niche in the centre was for the reception of a larger one. The doorway is five feet five inches wide, and ten feet high, with lintels of sapote wood still in their places. The interior is divided into two apartments,—the outer, fifteen feet long, by seven feet wide, and nineteen feet high; and the inner one, twelve feet long, four feet wide, and eleven feet high. Both are entirely destitute of ornament, and it is not easy to conjecture to what end they served, as they are small, and have no apparent connection with the rest of the building.

PLATE XII.

ORNAMENT OVER THE GATEWAY OF THE GREAT
TEOCALLIS, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY W. PARROTT.

This elegant specimen of Indian design and workmanship forms part of the front of the upper building of the Diviner's House, mentioned in the preceding description. The edifice is seventy-two feet in length and twelve feet deep. The interior is divided into three apartments, the centre one twenty-four feet by seven, and the side ones nineteen feet by seven. These apartments did not communicate with each other; the side ones had each a doorway opening to the eastward, and the middle room a doorway facing the west—now destroyed—of which the position is shown in the drawing. The ornament is somewhat different in character to that of the other buildings at Uxmal. The relief is low, and, unassisted by bright colours, would hardly have been visible from the ground, even aided by the transparent atmosphere of a tropical climate. There can be little doubt (speaking from analogy) that the entire façade was painted, although all traces of colour have disappeared. The pedestals and remains of eight statues are visible on this façade.

PLATE XIII.

GENERAL VIEW OF UXMAL, TAKEN FROM THE ARCHWAY
OF LAS MONJAS, LOOKING SOUTH.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

This view embraces several of the most remarkable ruins at Uxmal, and the remaining ones are shown by Plate VIII. To the extreme left, in the distance, is the "Casa de la Vieja," or of the "Old Woman,"—a small teocallis, having at its base the rudely sculptured statue of a woman, from which it derives its name. The second and most colossal terrace of the Casa del Gobernador is seen extending to the right; and in the centre of the view is the casa itself, seen endwise:—for a description of it, see Plate IX. Beneath it, and a little to the right, is the "Casa de las Tortugas," or "House of the Turtles:" this name was given to it by Padre Carillo, of Ticul, from a bead, or row, of turtles, which goes entirely round the building on the upper cornice. The length of this edifice is ninety-four feet by a depth of thirty-four, and, in size and ornament, contrasts strikingly with the Casa del Gobernador. It wants the rich and gorgeous decoration of the former, but is distinguished for its justness and beauty of proportion, and its chasteness and simplicity of ornament: unhappily it is fast going to decay. In 1839, it was trembling and tottering, and by 1842, the whole of the centre had fallen in, and the interior was blocked up with the ruins of the fallen roof. Beyond the Casa de las Tortugas are two large teocalli, on the nearest of which are no remains of building, but the furthest has on its summit the ruins of an edifice, somewhat similar in its plan to the structure on the Great Teocallis, or "House of the Diviner." In front of the last building stands the "Casa de Palomos," or "House of the Pigeons:" it is two hundred and forty feet long, composed of a double range of rooms, from the dividing wall of which rise pyramidal structures, not unlike the gables of an Elizabethan or Gothic house. The small oblong openings give them somewhat the appearance of pigeon houses, whence the name.

PLATE XIV.

PORTION OF A BUILDING; LAS MONJAS, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The engraving represents a portion of the façade, on the left, or western side, entering the court-yard. It was, when entire, one hundred and seventy-three feet long; and is distinguished by two colossal serpents, entwined, running through and encompassing nearly all the ornaments throughout its whole length. Only two portions of this façade now remain; the plate exhibits that towards the north end of the building. The tail of the serpent is held up nearly over its head, and has an ornament upon it like a turban, with a plume of feathers. The marks on the extremity of the tail are probably intended to designate a rattlesnake, with which species of serpent the country abounds. The head of the serpent has its monstrous jaws wide open, and within them is a human head. The other portion remaining shows two entwined serpents, enclosing and running through the ornaments over a doorway. The principal feature in the ornament enclosed, is the figure of a human being, standing, but much mutilated. The bodies of the serpents, according to the representations of the same design in other parts of the sculpture, are covered with feathers. The plate shows about one-tenth of the whole façade; the other nine-tenths were enriched with the same mass of sculptured ornaments; and, towards the south end, the head and tail of the serpents corresponded in design and position with the portion still existing at the other. Don Simon Peon, the proprietor of Uxmal, said, that in 1835 the whole front stood perfect, and serpents were seen encircling every ornament in the building. These have since fallen, and lie in confused heaps at the foot of the monument.

PLATE XV.

PORTION OF LA CASA DE LAS MONJAS, UXMAL.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

This is the Plate referred to in the Introduction, and in the description of the general view of Las Monjas, Plate VIII. It forms part of an exceedingly rich and highly-decorated façade, two hundred and sixty-four feet long; and which, for profusion of ornament, rivals, if it does not surpass, the front of the Casa del Gobernador. It is useless attempting to explain by words that which is so much more perfectly understood by inspection of the drawing. The only remark perhaps necessary is this: there are, or rather were, five similar structures in the façade, and, although at a distance, they appear exactly alike—and are so, as regards general outline and size—yet the detail and making-up of the ornaments differ in each; and this observation will apply equally to the façades of nearly all the buildings at Uxmal, in which occur endless varieties in the detail of the decorations.

PLATE XVI.

GENERAL VIEW OF KABAH.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The ruins of Kabah lie on the common lands of the village of Nohcacab. Perhaps they have been known to the Indians from time immemorial; but, as we were informed by the Padre of the village of Nohcacab, until the opening of the road to Bolonchen, they were utterly unknown to the white inhabitants. This road passed through the ancient city, and revealed the great buildings, overgrown and, in some cases, towering above the tops of the trees. The discovery, however, created not the slightest sensation; the intelligence

of it had never reached the capital; and though, ever since its occurrence, the great edifices were visible to all who passed along the road, not a white man in the village had ever turned aside to look at them, except the Padre referred to. The Teocallis, to the left of the drawing, is the first object that meets the eye; grand, picturesque, ruined, and covered with trees, towering above every other object on the plain. Leaving this, and following a path to the distance of three or four hundred yards, we reach the foot of a terrace, twenty feet high, the edge of which is overgrown with trees; ascending this, we stand on a platform, two hundred feet in width, by one hundred and forty-two feet deep. In the centre of the platform is a range of stone steps, forty feet wide and twenty in number, leading to an upper terrace. On this terrace stands a building, on the extreme right of the drawing, one hundred and fifty-one feet in front, remarkable for the extraordinary richness and ornament of its façade. In all the buildings of Uxmal, without a single exception, up to the cornice which runs over the doorway, the buildings are of plain stone, but this was ornamented from the very foundation, two layers under the lower cornice, to the top. The ornaments are of the same character with those at Uxmal, alike complicated and incomprehensible. The cornice running over the doorway is very elegant and graceful in its design, and would not disgrace the architecture of a more polished people.

This building has five doorways in front, communicating to as many outer rooms; and these again to five other inner rooms, entirely dark, except the light which enters through the doorways. Windows are not found in the Yucatan buildings, but there is an occasional substitute for them, in small narrow openings, four or five inches wide and twelve inches high, admitting a little light and air.

The Casa, or building, next the last-mentioned, stands on a platform, one hundred and seventy feet long, by one hundred and ten feet broad. It consists of two stories, the lower one almost entirely ruined. The chambers are very small, with doorways opening on to the platform. A little to the right in the drawing is a Teocallis, measuring one hundred and forty feet on one side, and one hundred and six on the other. It consists of three distinct stories, each receding from, and being smaller than, the one under, and terminating with a broad platform on the top, with a handsome stone staircase on one side.

In the distance is seen a building, called by the Indians "Casa de la Justicia," or House of Justice. It measures one hundred and thirteen feet in front, and has five chambers, each twenty feet long and nine feet wide, and all perfectly plain. The exterior is slightly ornamented. At the foot of the Teocallis is a solitary arch, fourteen feet in the opening, and constructed after the peculiar fashion of the country. From its position, it would seem to have been one of the main entrances into the city, or, possibly, a commemorative triumphal arch.

PLATE XVII.

INTERIOR OF THE PRINCIPAL BUILDING AT KABAH.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The exterior of this building is described at the preceding Plate. The interior consists of two parallel chambers, the one in front being twenty-seven feet long and ten feet six inches wide; and the other of the same length, but a few inches narrower, communicating by a doorway in the centre. The inner room is raised two feet eight inches higher than the front, and the ascent is by two steps, carved out of a single block of stone, the lower one (see Drawing) being in the form of a scroll. The sides of the steps are enriched with a similar ornament to that of the façade of the building. Extending from either side of this ornament to the ends of the apartment are small engaged columns, without either base or capital. The whole composition is graceful and pretty, and the scroll step in particular is one of the most appropriate designs to be met with in Yucatan.

PLATE XVIII.

WELL AND BUILDING AT SABACHTSCHÉ.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

The Rancho of Sabachtsché lies on the Camino Real from Ticul to Bolonchen. It is inhabited entirely by Indians, and is distinguished by a well, built by the present proprietor of the Rancho. Formerly the inhabitants were dependent entirely upon the well at Tabi, six miles distant. Besides its real value, this well presented a curious and lively spectacle. A group of women was around. It had no rope or fixtures of any kind for raising water, but across the mouth was a round beam, laid upon two posts, over which the women were letting down and hoisting up little bark buckets. Every woman brought with her, and carried away, her own bucket and rope, the latter coiled up and laid on the top of her head, with the end hanging down behind, and forming a sort of head-dress. The building which appears in the engraving, stands in the suburbs of the Rancho, just beyond the huts of the Indians. We found it overgrown by trees, and beautifully picturesque. On one corner of the roof a vulture had built her nest, and, scared away at our approach, hovered over our heads, looking down upon us. The front of this building appeared tasteful, and even elegant in design, and, when perfect, it must have presented a fine appearance. It has a single doorway, opening into a chamber twenty-five feet long, by ten feet wide. Above the door is a portion of plain masonry, and over this a cornice, supporting twelve small pilasters, having between them the diamond ornament; then a massive cornice, with pilasters and diamond work, surmounted by another cornice, making in all four cornices,—an arrangement we had not previously met with.

PLATE XIX.

GATEWAY AT LABNAH.

ON STONE, BY J. C. BOURNE.

This may be considered as one of the most pleasing architectural designs to be met with among the ruined edifices of Yucatan. It is the inner façade of an arched gateway, ten feet wide, leading into what was formerly the court-yard of a large building. Under the arch are two doorways, giving entrance to two small rooms, twelve feet by eight, which also have openings towards the area. Over each doorway is a square recess, flanked by small pilasters, and supporting a mass of masonry pyramidally disposed. In the recesses are the remains of rich ornaments in stucco, with marks of colours still clearly visible, perhaps intended to represent the face of the sun surrounded by its rays, and probably to the Indian an object of superstitious adoration. The construction of the arch is the same as is found all over the country. The stones are laid horizontally, each projecting a little beyond the under one, until at last they nearly meet, and a flat cover-stone completes the arch, if it may be so called. This species of roof has its advantages; there is no lateral thrust, and frequently when one side of an apartment, and, consequently, half the roof had fallen, the other remains entire. The cement used was very good, equal, in many instances, to that found in the ancient Roman buildings.

PLATE XX.

WELL AT BOLONCHEN.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

Bolonchen derives its name from two Maya words,—*Bolon*, which signifies “nine,” and *Chen*, “wells;” and it means “the nine wells.” From time immemorial, nine wells formed at this place the centre of a population, and these wells are now in the plaza of the village. Their origin is as obscure and unknown as that of the ruined cities which strew the land, and as little thought of.

The custody and supply of these wells form a principal part of the business of the village authorities, but with all their care the supply of water lasts but seven or eight months in the year. At the period of our visit the time was approaching when the wells would fail, and the inhabitants be driven to an extraordinary cavern, at half a league's distance from the village.

There was one grand difficulty in the way of our visiting the cavern, or well. Since the commencement of the rainy season it had not been used; and every year, before having recourse to it, there was a work of several days to be done in repairing the ladders.

Setting out, however, from the village of Bolonchen, by the Campeachy road, we turned off by a well beaten path, following which we fell into a winding lane, and, descending gradually, reached the foot of a rude, lofty, and abrupt opening, under a bold ledge of overhanging rock, seeming a magnificent entrance to a great temple for the worship of the God of nature.

We disencumbered ourselves of superfluous apparel, and following the Indians, each with a torch in his hand, entered a wild cavern, which, as we advanced, became darker. At the distance of sixty paces the descent was precipitous, and we went down by a ladder about twenty feet. Here all light from the mouth of the cavern was lost, but we soon reached the brink of a great perpendicular descent, to the very bottom of which a strong body of light was thrown from a hole in the surface; a perpendicular depth, as we afterwards found by measurement, of two hundred and ten feet. As we stood on the brink of this precipice, under the shelving of an immense mass of rock, seeming darker from the stream of light thrown down the hole, gigantic stalactites and huge blocks of stones assumed all manner of fantastic shapes, and seemed like monstrous animals or dieties of a subterraneous world.

From the brink on which we stood, an enormous ladder of the rudest possible construction led to the bottom of the hole. It was between seventy and eighty feet long, and about twelve feet wide, made of the rough trunks of saplings lashed together lengthwise, and supported all the way down by horizontal trunks braced against the face of the precipitous rock. The ladder was double, having two sets, or flights, of rounds, divided by a middle partition, and the whole fabric was lashed together by withes. It was very steep, seemed precarious and insecure, and confirmed the worst accounts we had heard of the descent into this extraordinary well.

Our Indians began the descent, but the foremost had hardly got his head below the surface, before one of the rounds broke, and he only saved himself by clinging to another. The ladder having been made when the withes were green, these were now dry, cracked, and some of them broken. We attempted a descent with some little misgivings; but by keeping each hand and foot on a different round, with an occasional crash and slide, we all reached the foot of the ladder; that is, our own party, our Indians, and some three or four of our escort, the rest having disappeared. Plate XX. represents the scene at the foot of this ladder. Looking up, the view of its broken sides, with the light thrown down from the orifice above, was the wildest that can be conceived. As yet we were only at the mouth of this well, called by the Indians, "*La Senora escondida*;" or, "the Lady hidden away:" and it is derived from a fanciful Indian story, that a lady, stolen from her mother, was concealed by her lover in this cave. On one side of the cavern is an opening in the rock, entering by which, we soon came to an abrupt descent, down which was another long and trying ladder. It was laid against the broken face of the rock, not so steep as the first, but in a much more rickety condition: the rounds were loose, and the upper ones gave way on the first attempt to descend. The cave was damp, and the rock and the ladder were wet and slippery. It was evident that the labour of exploring this cave was to be greatly increased by the state of the ladders, and there might be some danger attending it; but, even after all we had seen of caves, there was something so wild and grand in this that we could not bring ourselves to give up the attempt. Fortunately, the Cura had taken care to provide us with a rope, and fastening one end round a large stone, an Indian carried the other down to the foot of the ladder. We followed one at a time; holding the rope with one hand, and with the other grasping the side of the ladder: it was impossible to carry a torch, and we were obliged to feel our way in the dark, or with only such light as could reach us from the torches above and below. At the foot of this ladder was a large cavernous chamber, with irregular passages branching off in different directions to seven deposits or sources of water, from which the village of Bolonchen is supplied.

PLATE XXI.

LAS MONJAS, CHICHEN-ITZA.

ON STONE, BY G. MOORE.

The plate represents the end façade of a long majestic pile, called, like one of the principal buildings at Uxmal, the "Monjas," or "Nuns." The height of this façade is twenty-five feet, and its width thirty-five. It has two cornices of tasteful design; over the doorway are twenty small cartouches of hieroglyphics, in four rows, five in a row, and to make room for which the lower cornice is carried up; over them stand out, in a line, six bold projecting curved ornaments, resembling an elephant's trunk; and the upper centre

space over the doorway is an irregular circular niche, in which portions of a seated figure, with a head-dress of feathers, still remain. The rest of the ornaments are of that distinctive stamp, characteristic of the ancient American cities, and unlike the designs of any other people. The building is composed of two structures, entirely different from each other; one of which forms a sort of wing to the principal edifice, and has at the end the façade presented. The whole length is two hundred and twenty-eight feet, and the depth of the principal structure is one hundred and twelve feet. The only portion containing interior chambers is that which we have called the wing. The great structure to which the wing adjoins is apparently a solid mass of masonry, erected only to hold up the two ranges of buildings upon it. A grand staircase, fifty-six feet wide, the largest we saw in the country, runs to the top. This staircase is thirty-two feet high, and has thirty-nine steps. On the top of the structure stands a range of buildings, with a platform of fourteen feet in front, extending all around. From the back of this platform the grand staircase rises again, by fifteen steps, to the roof of the second range, which forms a platform in front of the third range. The circumference of this building is six hundred and thirty-eight feet, and its height, when entire, was sixty-five feet. The art and skill of the builders seem to have been lavishly expended upon the second range: this is one hundred and four feet long and thirty feet wide; and the broad platform around it, though overgrown with grass several feet high, formed a noble promenade, commanding a magnificent view of the whole surrounding country.

PLATE XXII.

TEOCALLIS, AT CHICHEN-ITZA.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The ruins of Chichen-Itza are nine leagues from Valladolid.—(See Map.) They lie on a Hacienda, called by the name of the ancient city.

The Camino Real to Valladolid passes through the field of ruins. The great buildings tower on both sides of the road in full sight of all passers-by; and from the fact that this road is much travelled, the ruins of Chichen are perhaps more generally known to the people of the country than any others in Yucatan. The Plate represents the Castillo, or Castle, the first building seen on approaching the ruins, and, from every point of view, the grandest and most conspicuous object that towers above the plain. The mound measures at the base, on the north and south sides, one hundred and ninety-six feet ten inches; and on the east and west sides, two hundred and two feet. It does not face the cardinal points exactly, though probably so intended; and in all the buildings, from some cause not easily accounted for, while one varies ten degrees one way, that immediately adjoining varies twelve or thirteen degrees the other. It is built up, apparently solid, from the plain to the height of seventy-five feet. On the west side is a staircase, thirty-seven feet wide; on the north, being that presented in the engraving, the staircase is forty-four feet wide, and has ninety steps. On the ground at the foot of the staircase, forming a bold, striking, and well-conceived commencement to this lofty range, are two colossal serpent's heads, ten feet in length, with mouths wide open and tongues protruding, as shown by the fragment in the foreground of the drawing: no doubt they were emblematic of some religious belief.

The platform on the top of the mound measures sixty-one feet from north to south, and sixty-four from east to west; and the building measures, in the same directions, forty-three feet and forty-nine. Single doorways face the east, south, and west, having massive lintels of sapote wood covered with elaborate carvings, and the stone jambs are ornamented with figures. The sculpture is much worn; but the head-dresses, ornamented with plumes of feathers, and portions of the rich attire, still remain. The face of one of the figures is well preserved, and has a dignified appearance; it has, too, earrings, and the nose bored, which, according to historical account, was so prevalent a custom in Yucatan, that long after the conquest the Spaniards passed laws for its prohibition.

All the other jambs are decorated with sculpture of the same general character, and all open into a corridor six feet wide, extending round three sides of the building.

The doorway facing the north, represented in the engraving, presents a grander appearance, being twenty feet wide, and having two short massive columns, eight feet eight inches high, with two large projections at the base, entirely covered with elaborate sculpture. This doorway gives access to a corridor forty feet long by six feet four inches wide and seventeen feet high. In the back wall of this corridor is a single doorway, having sculptured jambs, over which is a richly-carved sapote beam, and giving entrance to an apartment nineteen feet eight inches long, twelve feet nine inches wide, and seventeen feet high. In this apartment are two square pillars, nine feet four inches high and one foot ten inches on each side, having sculptured figures on all their sides, and supporting massive sapote beams, covered with the most elaborate carving of curious and intricate designs, but so defaced and time-worn, that, in the obscurity of the room, lighted only from the door, it was difficult to make them out. The impression produced on entering this lofty chamber, so entirely different from all we had met with before, was perhaps stronger than any we had yet experienced. We passed a whole day within it, from time to time looking down upon the ruined buildings of the ancient city, and an immense field stretching on all sides beyond.

PLATE XXIII.

CASTLE, AT TULOOM.

ON STONE, BY A. PICKEN.

The ruined City of Tuloom is situated on a ledge of rocks on the eastern shore of Yucatan. The building given in Plate XXIII., although called a Castillo, or Castle, was, there can be little doubt, a place used for the religious ceremonies of the Indians. At the time the drawing was made, trees obstructed the view, which had to be cut down before the design of the edifice could be made out. The building, including the wings, measures at its base one hundred feet in length. The grand staircase is thirty feet wide, with twenty-four steps; and a substantial parapet on each side—still in good preservation—gives it an unusually imposing character. In the doorway are two columns, making three entrances, with square recesses above them, all of which once contained ornaments; and in the centre, and one of the side ones, fragments of statues still remain. The interior is divided into two corridors, each twenty-six feet long; the one in front is six feet six inches wide, and had at each end a stone bench or divan. A single doorway leads to the back corridor, which is nine feet wide, and has a stone bench extending along the foot of the wall. There were, in this room, traces of fire and copal, making it probable that some Indians had recently been engaged in celebrating their ancient religious rites, which they still adhere to when not within observation of the Spaniards. On each side of the doorway are stone rings, intended for the support of the door, and in the back wall are oblong openings, which admit breezes from the sea. Both apartments have the triangular arched ceiling, and both were conveniently and pleasantly arranged for living apartments. The wings are much lower than the principal building. Each consists of two ranges; the under one standing on a low platform, from which are steps leading to the upper. The latter consists of two chambers, of which the one in front is twenty-four feet long and twenty wide, having two columns in the doorway, and two in the middle of the chamber. The centre columns were ornamented with devices in stucco, one of which was a masked face, and the other the head of a rabbit. The walls were entire, but the roof had fallen; the rubbish on the floor was less massive than that formed in other places by the remains of the triangular arched roof, and of different materials; and there were holes along the top of the wall, as if beams had been laid in them, all of which induced the belief that the roofs had been flat, and supported by wooden beams resting on the two columns in the centre. From this apartment a doorway, three feet wide, close to the wall of the principal building, leads to a chamber twenty-four feet long and nine feet wide, also roofless, and having the same indications that the roof had been flat and supported by wooden beams; which opinion was afterwards verified, by the discovery of wooden roofs still entire in the adjoining buildings.

PLATE XXIV.

TEMPLE, AT TULOOM.

ON STONE, BY W. PARROTT.

The Temple at Tuloom faces towards the east, and is distant two hundred and fifty feet from the Castillo, or Castle, described in the last plate. Although the distance is but trifling, the whole area is so blocked up with trees, that it was by mere accident this building and several others were discovered. It stands on a terrace six feet high, with a staircase in the centre. The front of the building measures forty-five feet by a depth of twenty-six. There are two stout pillars still standing in the principal doorway, supporting wooden beams; and over the centre are the remains of a head, surrounded by a profusion of feathers. The interior is divided into two principal and parallel apartments; and at the north extremity of the inner one is a smaller chamber, containing an enclosed altar five feet long by three feet six inches deep, for burning copal. The roof had fallen, and trees were growing out of the floor.

PLATE XXV.

COLOSSAL HEAD, AT IZAMAL.

ON STONE, BY H. WARREN.

Izamal, at the height of its prosperity, must have been one of the most important of the Indian cities of Yucatan. There is abundant testimony to prove that it was inhabited at the time of the Spanish conquest. There are still remaining several mounds, one of which is the largest in Yucatan, but so dilapidated and disfigured, as to defy accurate measurement: it may be about seven hundred feet long and sixty high. It is said to contain interior chambers and colossal statues; but no entrance at present exists to these subterranean apartments. The great church and convent of the Franciscan monks stands on the upper platform of one of these ancient teocalli, and the open area fronting the church is probably not less than two hundred feet square, surrounded on three sides by an open colonnade, forming a noble promenade, overlooking the modern city of Izamal and the surrounding country to a great distance. On the side of a mound about two hundred feet long, and which formerly had stone and stucco ornaments from one end to the other, is the Colossal Head—perhaps of some deity—represented in the plate: it is seven feet eight inches in height, and seven feet in width. A stone, one foot six inches long, protrudes from the chin, intended perhaps for burning copal on.



OUTLINE MAP
OF
CENTRAL AMERICA & YUCATAN

Showing the Situation
OF THE RUINED CITIES & MONUMENTS
Visited by Messrs. Stephens & Catherwood
In the Years 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842.

The dotted red line shows the route.
F. Catherwood.
1844.







IDOL AT COPAN.





THE GREAT STONE COLUMN AT CHICHEN



BROKEN IDOL AT COPAN

V







VIEW OF THE BUILDING



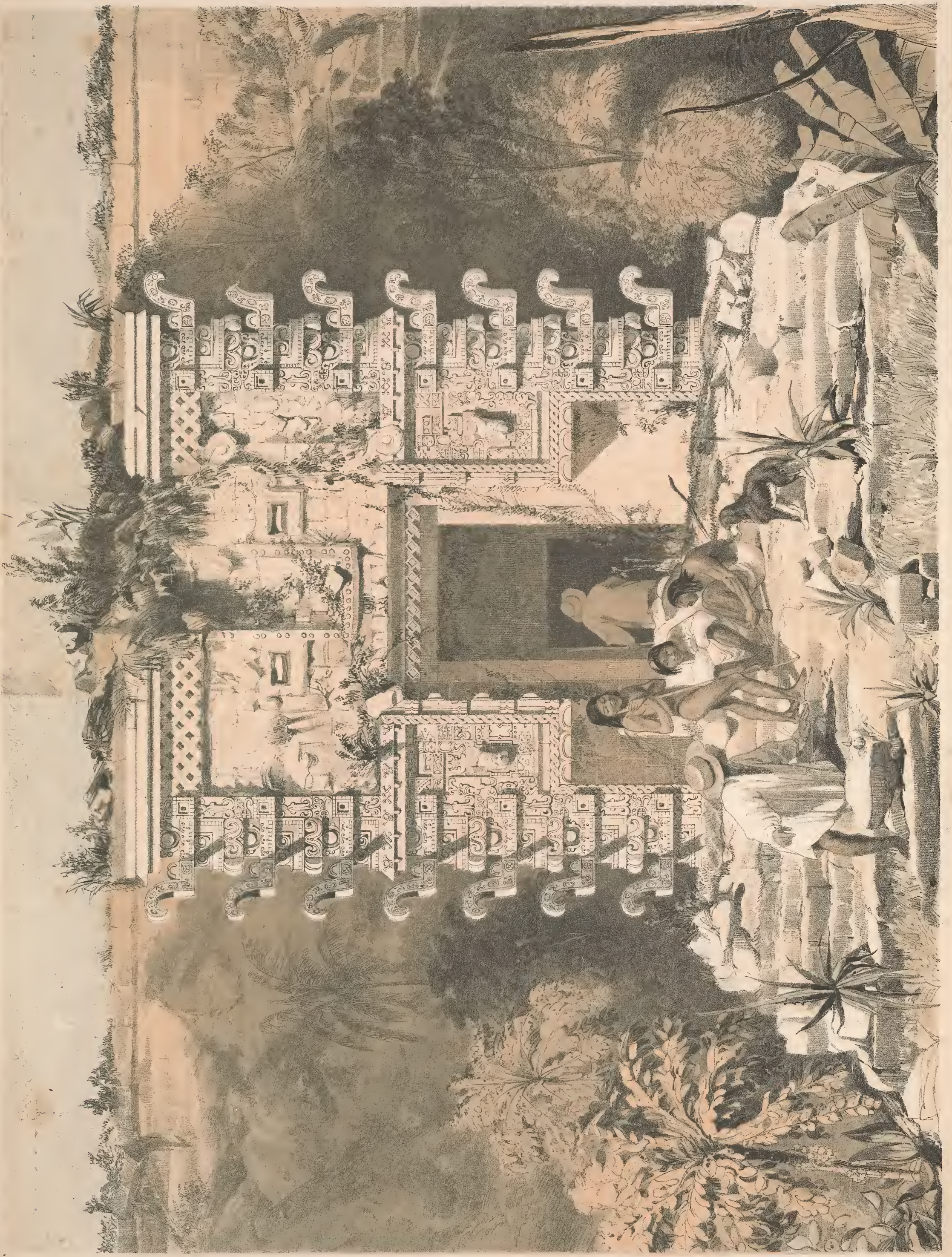






GATEWAY, CASA DEL GOBERNADOR, UXMAL.



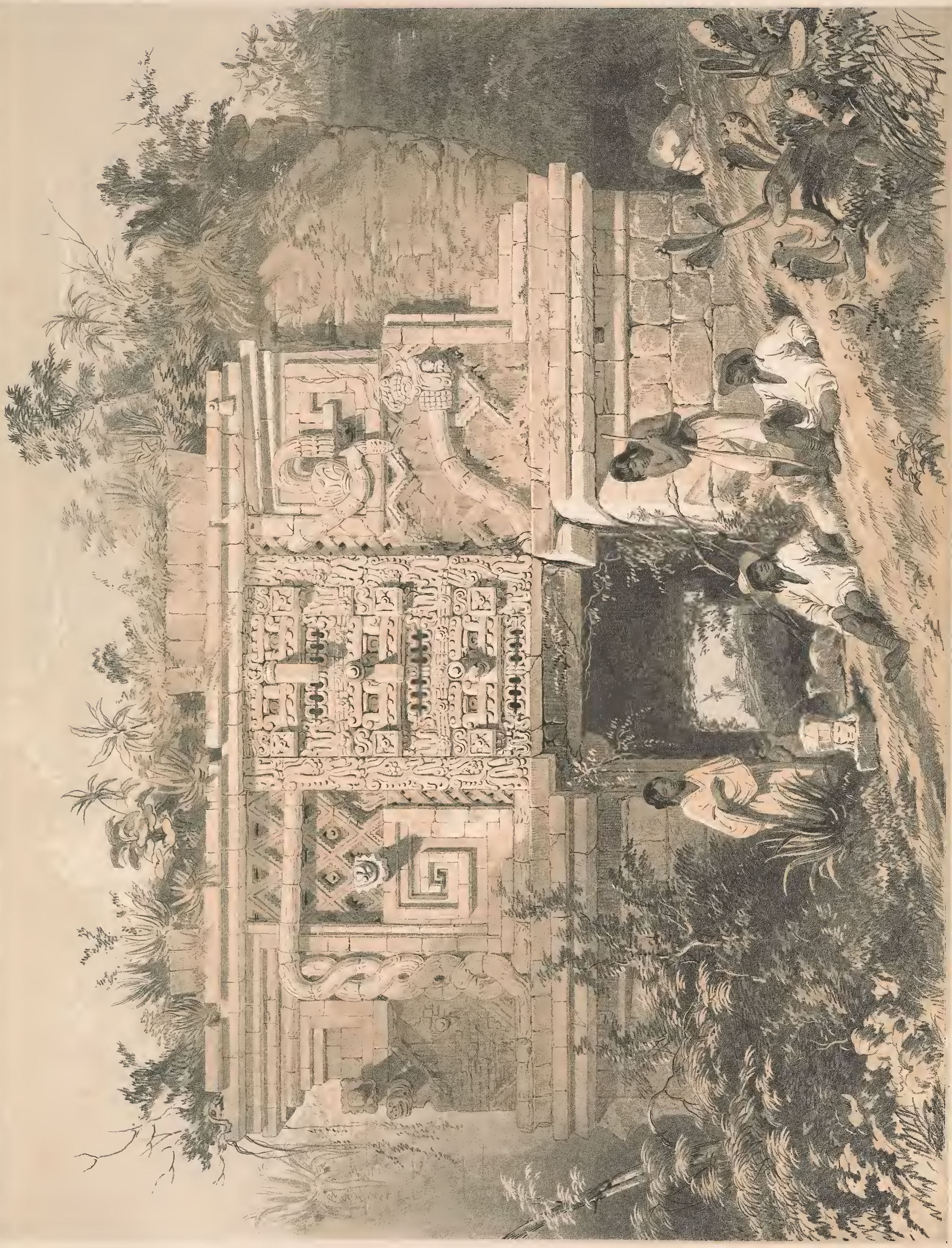












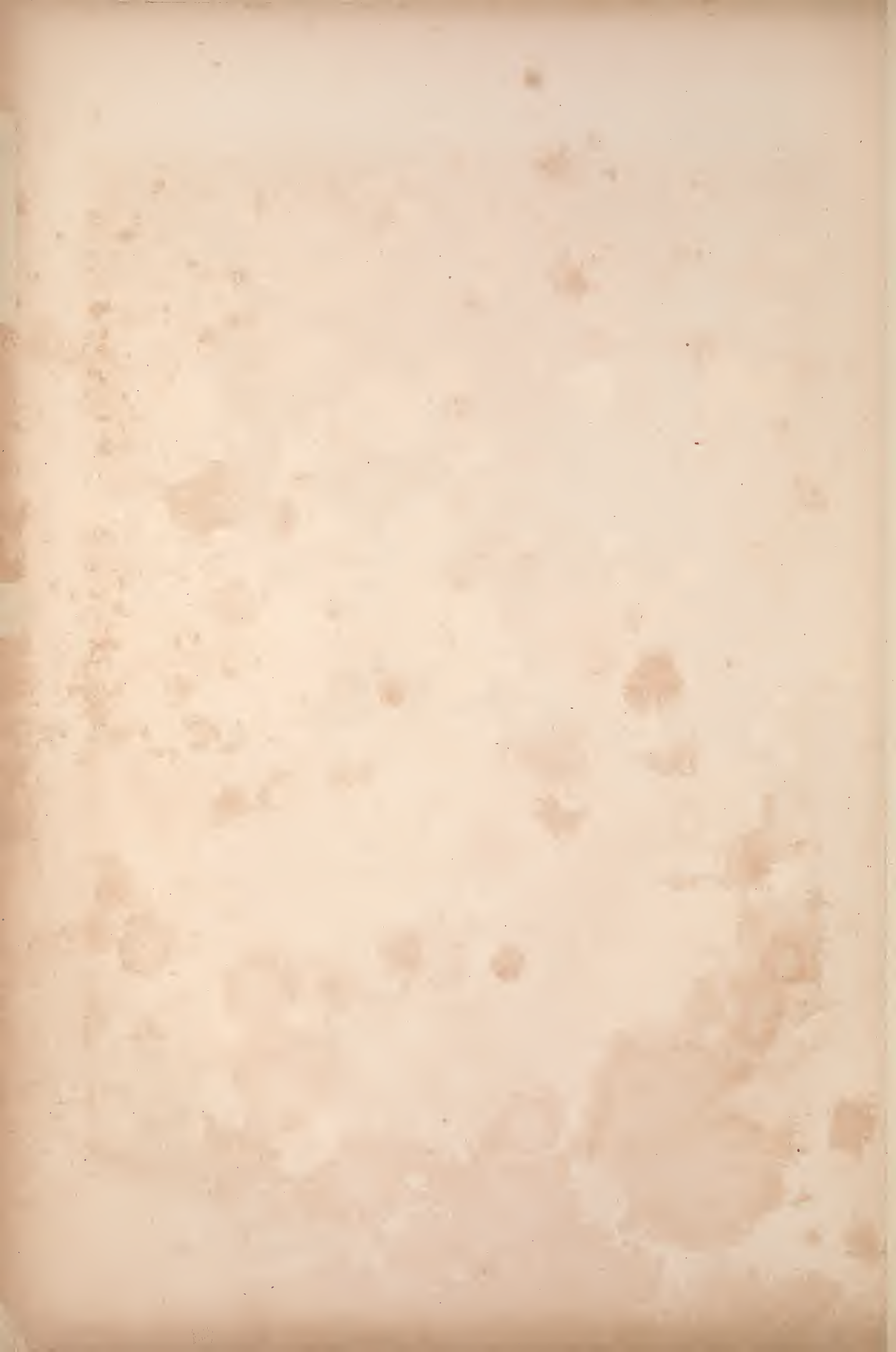






INTERIOR OF THE PRIMORDIAL BUILDING AT WABASH

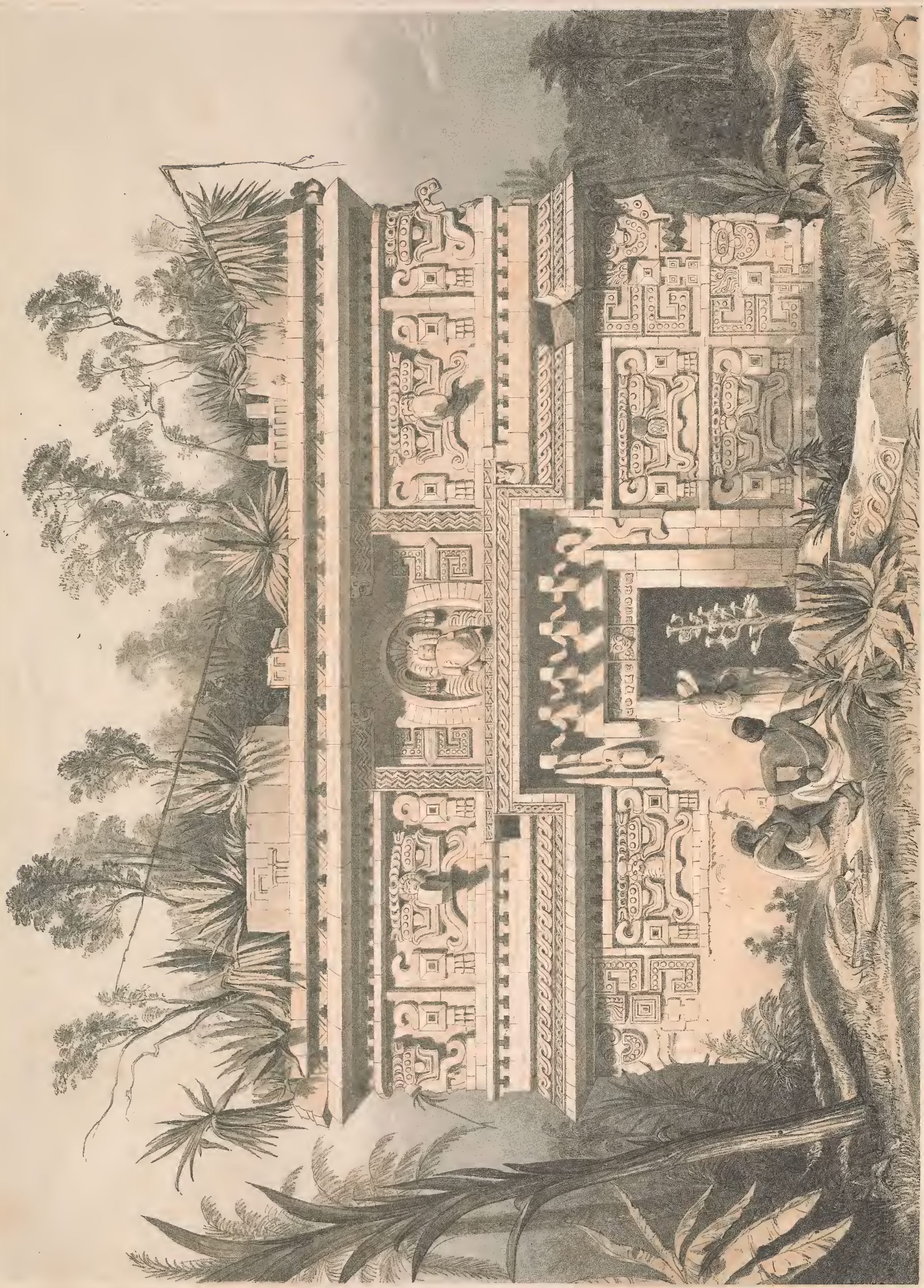








WELL OF BOLONCHEN





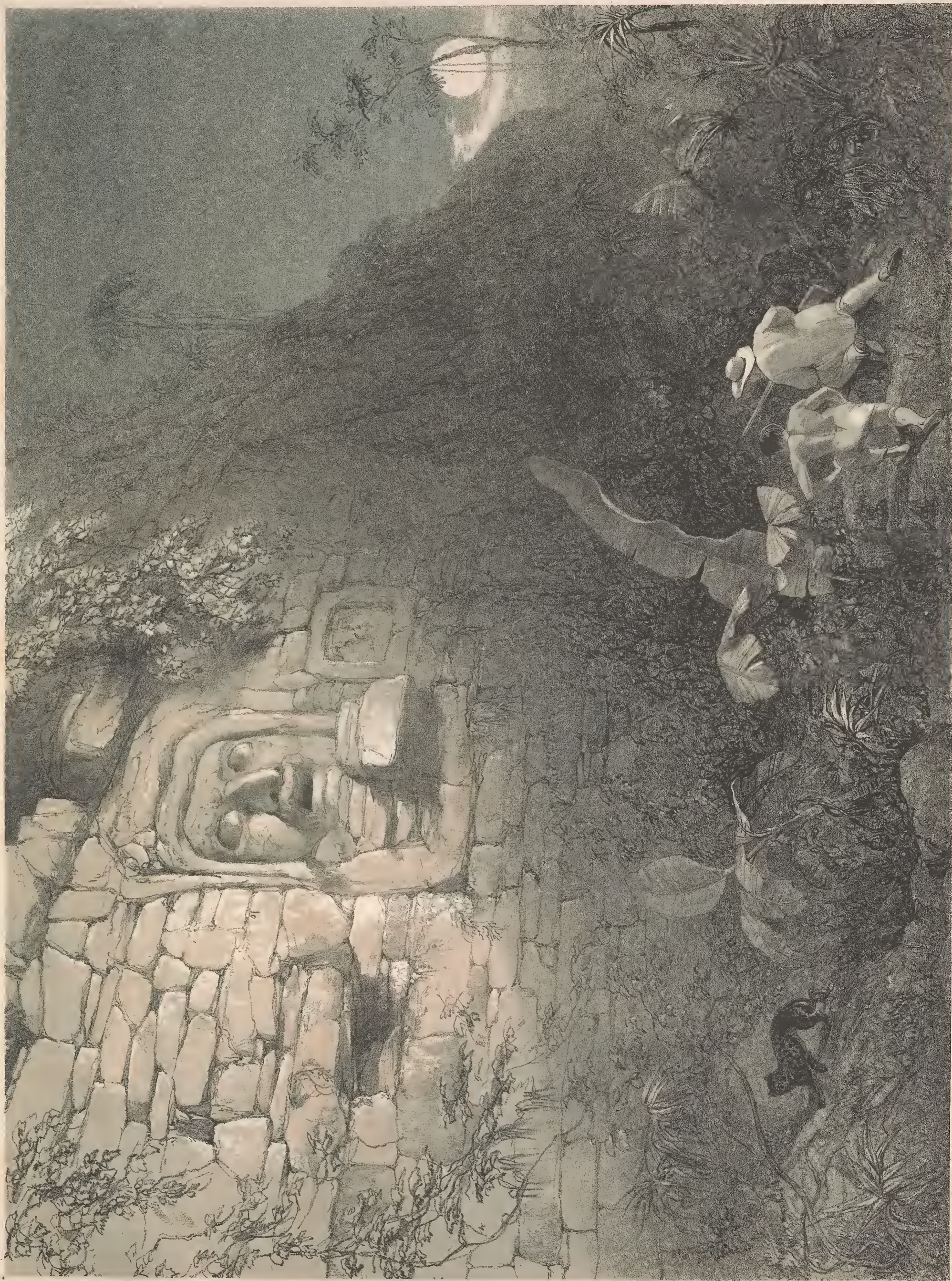
















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